



MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM

The Hatch

Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers, Inc.
<http://www.mlsff.org/>

March
2009

February Outing

Great Waters Expo Road Trip!

Six of us, more than slightly crazy club members, headed off to Schaumburg, IL on the snowy and wind blown morning on the 21st to see what the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo would yield.

The list of speakers was as good as last year, and included Tim Holschlag, Robert Tomes, Dave Barron, Brian O'Keefe, Milwaukee's own Pat Ehlers and others. They were all good, but the highlight of the show was listening to Kelly Galloup speak about Streamer Tactics and the revolution in their use. His presentation was a good mix of streamer and fishing knowledge, interspersed with a liberal dose of humorous hints.



Kelly Galloup and his Zoo Cougar streamer.

The fish Kelly targets with his use of streamers are those trout over twenty inches. At that point in their lives most of them have become meat-eaters in order to get enough mass to survive and grow.

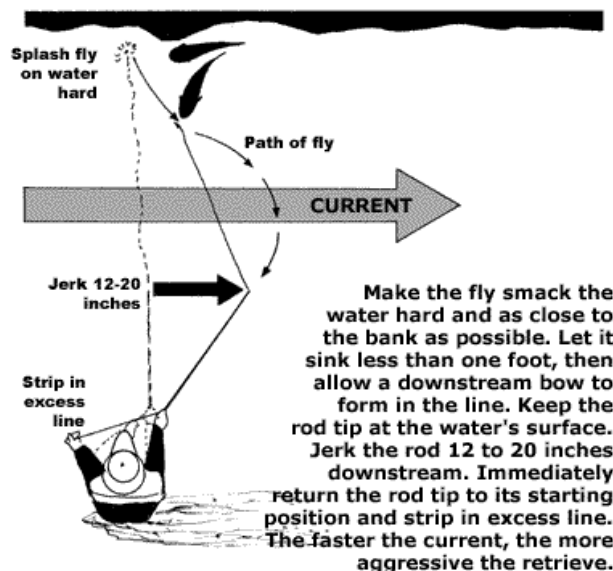
Kelly spoke of the need of a preset pattern or plan of what colors and streamers you would use. He especially emphasized changing colors or flies often to find the one that flips the fishes predator instinct. He said it's not uncommon for him to switch flies every ten minutes until he finds that one that's the key to the get the fish — and said sometimes he does it within five minutes for a client!

He showed us the various streamers that he uses with such great success, and gave us a some insight in how to fish them to increase our success with streamers.

He also spoke of his favorite technique for working a streamer, the jerk-strip. It allows you to work the fly with the tip of the rod, not simply stripping in line off of the water. The drawing to the right is a basic illustration of how it works.

In addition there were numerous fly tyers showing how to tie their favorite flies, whether they be trout, bass or saltwater patterns.

The worst thing about the show was that we knew we had to wait two weeks to put our learning to use!



The Perfect Pattern

Why the Elk Hair Caddis rates a permanent place in your fly box — by John Merwin

The perfect dry fly for trout would be high-floating, durable, simple to tie, and almost universally effective. The Elk Hair Caddis is notable for all those reasons, and a few more. The pattern is usually thought of as a Western style, but it was first tied by Al Troth in Pennsylvania in the 1950s. Troth later gained fame as a Montana fly tyer and trout guide, and his new dry fly first came into wide use along turbulent trout rivers in the Rockies. It has produced well for me on trout waters from Alaska to Ireland. Now it's a global standard.



Sizes and Colors

Caddisflies with outspread, fluttering wings look much bigger in the air than they actually are. This can make streamside selection of a fly pattern tricky, and most people tend to use caddis dries that are too big. Popular Elk Hair sizes range from 10 down to 20. When in doubt, smaller is better. I most often use sizes 16 and 18.

The most useful wing colors are tan, brown, gray, and black, usually with dubbed-fur bodies and hackle to match. A specific caddis hatch might require a more specific imitation - tan wing with an apple-green body is a common example - in which case a local fly shop is the best source.

On the Water

Versatility is key to the Elk Hair's wide success. While it will often draw a strike when simply dead-drifted over a rising trout, the fly's high-floating characteristic means it can be skated, twitched, and otherwise worked on the surface. It's these tactics that can draw slashing strikes from surprisingly large fish, as big trout will hammer the fly with all the gusto of a big bass taking a surface plug.

I usually fish these dries down-and-across stream, using a combination of reach-casting and slack-line techniques to avoid drag. As the line tightens in the current, twitch the fly briefly, then lower the rod tip to create slack and a momentary dead-drift of the fly. This twitch-and-pause routine mimics the action of adult caddis fluttering on the surface. Your leader tippet must be floating along with the fly, or your twitches will drag the fly under. I often dress both fly and leader with floatant before I start.

Sometimes it's best to dress only the fly. Then your leader tippet will sink, drawing the fly under when twitched. If you allow some slack at this point, a well-dressed Elk Hair will bob quickly back to the surface, an action that trout at times find irresistible.

More Tricks

The Elk Hair's extreme buoyancy means it also works well as a strike indicator when it supports a small nymph as a trailer. Tie 18 to 24 inches of leader tippet to the hook bend of a dry caddis. Then add a size 22 to 16 Beaded Pheasant Tail or other lightly weighted nymph.

If trout are swirling underneath your Elk Hair, you should either try a smaller size or drag out your small scissors and start modifying the pattern. Trimming away the bottom hackle makes for a lower-flying, more imitative version. Trimming away most of the hackle and the wing makes for a partly submerged caddis emerger.

Elk Hairs aren't the answer to every situation involving dry flies and rising fish. Trout sipping little olive mayflies will often ignore a high-floating Elk Hair, to give just one example. But for searching the water in the absence of a major hatch - which means most of the time - and for drawing strikes from larger-than-average fish, Elk Hair Caddis are the dry-fly gold standard.

X-CADDIS

Many tiers have been frustrated with their elk or deer hair caddis wings. After only a few fish, the wing comes loose and twists around the hook shank. The problem is that thread mounted simply over the hair butts is not adequate to hold the wing in place. There is a solution, but it is not placing 49 more wraps of thread around the hair! The solution is the proper placement of thread to apply the most force.



A flat thread base made with un-twisted thread is needed at the wing location. When it comes time to mount the wing, secure it directly on top of the forward-most wraps of the thread base with a few wraps of well-twisted thread. This does several things: 1) the base thread on the hook acts as a friction point; 2) as with a rope, flat untwisted fibers are not as strong as when they are twisted (to a point); and 3) twisted tying thread is narrower than flat thread, so it bites deeper into the wing, thus pinching the hair onto the base thread tighter.

The wings on these two flies were tied with this technique. However, the amount of hair on the two flies is radically different. Both styles have caught fish, so it is up to the tier to decide what is best for their fishing situation.



Hook: TMC 100, 5210, 100BL, 900BL, Daiichi 1310, Mustad 94840, etc., sizes 12-20
Thread: 6/0, 8/0 color to match body
Tail: Zelon, amber gold or caddis gold, crinkled
Body: Dubbed beaver or Antron: tan, brown, olive or black to match the naturals
Wing: Deer or elk hair

Tying Steps:

1. Smash barb on hook with smooth jaw pliers or your vise.
2. Attach tying thread near bend and wind forward to within 1-½ to 2 eye-widths of the eye.
3. Separate out a quantity of Zelon equal to about half or less of what you would normally use. (The material will be doubled onto itself, thus the need for less than you would use when just trimming the Zelon to length.) The length of material should equal at least 3 shank lengths or more for ease of handling. Secure it where the thread was left in step 2 and trim excess. Next twist it about one turn clockwise. While holding the twist, fold the Zelon back onto itself forming a loop that is more than a gap width, but less than a shank length. Secure this now overlapping end just behind the first, and trim excess.
4. Twist the bubble shuck tightly counterclockwise. While holding the twisted bubble shuck, wind thread toward bend to secure it on top of hook. Stop where you want the shuck to begin: Before, at or after the bend.
5. Dub thread and wind a body forward to a point just behind where the wing will be tied in.
6. Untwist the thread, and lay a flat thread-base for the wings.

7. Start the bobbin spinning to twist the thread by moving the thumb toward the hook's eye relative to the first finger. (This will spin it counterclockwise for right hand tiers and clockwise for left hand tiers. A picky detail that will make the thread naturally wind toward the hook bend and away from the wing butts, which keeps them from spinning around the hook.)
8. Select a portion of deer or elk hair clean out under fur and stack it. Place hair on top of the hook with tips at rear of body. Secure the wing with twisted thread placing each wrap to rear of the first wrap. If the hair flares too much, un-twist the thread and wind rearward from the tie down point to make the hair lay more along the body.
9. Pick up the butts and put four or five whip-finish wraps tightly against the wing. If the thread furls with your whip finish technique, untwist the thread before whip finishing.
10. Trim butts leaving a small stub. Natural caddis have a small head.
11. A touch of flexible head cement (like Dave's Flexament) will help the thread and wing stay in place.

Caddis Hatches of Some Southwest Wisconsin Spring Creeks

Insect	Hatch Dates	Size	Streams	Notes
Little Black (Chimarra)	Early April to Early May	16-18	Timber Coulee Blue River West Fork	A slender bodied fly that can produce some very heavy hatches. I've not often seen its emergence but a black fly work great when you spot them dancing over riffles or on streamside vegetation.
American Grannom (Brachycentrus)	Most of May	16	Timber Coulee Big Green	Often a phenomenal hatch. I caught it one of the first days of the hatch and landed 50 fish on the Timber Coulee system.
Green Rock Worm (Rhyacophila)	Mid May to Mid June	14-16	Timber Coulee Big Green West Fork Black Earth	Probably one of the most commonly seen caddis and is a free-living caddis making the larva especially important for the nymph. A simple peacock herl body with a little coarse dubbing makes a great imitation.
Tan Caddis	June thru August	14	Timber Coulee West Fork	This was 1997's mid-summer savior on the West Fork and Timber Coulee. Hatches lasted for months and provided consistently good evening fishing
Gray Caddis	June	14-18	Big Green	I've only witnessed this hatch once but it was a spectacular day of fishing over larger, selective fish that had a hard time refusing the X-Caddis when presented correctly.

Hatch Chart and notes compiled by Bob Blumreich – *Silver Doctor Fly Fishing*.

Note: At our fly tying session at Sportsman's Warehouse on **Wednesday, March 11th**, we will concentrate on tying some caddis flies — both dry and pupa / emerger patterns for our spring creeks.

Come and join us! We'll be tying up in the employees' lunch area at 6:00 —8:00 pm.

For pattern & materials sheets or more information, contact Greg Schick at gaschick@wi.rr.com

March Meeting

Fishing the Driftless Area

Nick Volk, an Orvis Endorsed Guide, is coming to the March 10th club meeting.

Nick is going to talk about trout fishing in the Driftless Area. He might even branch out and talk about bass, bluegill, salmon/steelhead, and muskie fishing.

After an introduction to fishing at a young age, he graduated to fly fishing as a teenager. He's guided fishermen in Alaska and Wisconsin. Nick started his own guide service in 2004 Streamside Outfitters (www.streamsideoutfitters.com), headquartered in Madison, that offers trips on the spring creeks of SW Wisconsin, drift boat trips on the Wisconsin and Baraboo Rivers for smallmouth bass and muskies, and steelhead/salmon trips on Lake Michigan tributaries.

Join us at Yester Years Pub & Grill on W. Greenfield Ave. at 7:00 pm

Want some extra story time? Come at 6:00 pm and join us for a burger and a beer and chat with Nick and the rest of us who arrive early!

March Outing

Early Trout Season Road Trip!

Actually, that's a requirement of virtually all of our trout trips! We're heading off to the Blue River in Iowa County. We usually start fishing in the stretches up and downstream of Snow Bottom Road.

While it might be a little earlier for the little Black Caddis to make an appearance on the Blue, you could try some caddis pupae patterns, maybe with a midge larva or pupa tied below it. Personally, I'm going to break out some "Shop Vacs" and see what I can entice with them.

If you're interested in joining us, be sure to put your name on the outing signup sheet at the membership meeting. You can also contact Ken Zielinski by email or phone — information that can be found on page 7 of the Hatch. We'll see if we can set up a carpool or a caravan to the stream.



Late winter and early spring fishing can be soooooo much fun! We don't expect to see any of these conditions so come and join us on the Blue River on Saturday, March 21st. Sign up sheet and more info available at the March Membership meeting!



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MILWAUKEE LAKE & STREAM FLY FISHERS

2008 CALENDAR

	March	April	May
Meeting	10th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill	14th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill	12th @ Yester Years Pub & Grill
Outing	Spring Trout Opener Blue River 21st	Trout Fishing Road Trip Gordon Creek 25th	Trout Fishing Road Trip Black Earth Creek 23rd
Fly Tying	11th & 25th	15th & 29th	13th & 27th
Notes			

Meeting:	September through April: 7 pm Yesteryears Pub & Grill 9427 W. Greenfield
Outing:	Meet at 6:30 am at Park & Rides lots. See Hatch for details.
Fly Tying:	Mar. & Apr. only: Sportsmen's Warehouse (I-43 & Mooreland Rd.) from 6:00 - 8:30 pm.

The Hatch is the monthly newsletter of the Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers, an incorporated nonprofit organization affiliated with the Federation of Fly Fishers.

Milwaukee Lake & Stream Fly Fishers meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Yester-Years Pub & Grill, 9427 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI

Meetings May through August are on the water. Read **The Hatch** for locations or go to our website at: <http://www.mlsff.org>

Send correspondence to:
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Submit contributions for **The Hatch** by the 20th of the month to:
Greg Schick, Editor
at: gaschick@wi.rr.com

"If you've got short, stubby fingers and wear reading glasses, any relaxation you would normally derive from fly fishing is completely eliminated when you try to tie on a fly."
— Jack Ohman, *Fear of Fly Fishing*, 1988

"I never met a fly rod that I didn't like. Now, don't get me wrong. Some fly rods don't like me, but my inability to cast them well is my fault, not theirs."
— Jimmy D Moore